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INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0559
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4093
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7649
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5208
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 1099
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0994
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000971

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DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, DRL, AND IO
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: UN SILENT ON GAMBARI VISIT

REF: A. RANGOON 263

[1](#)B. RANGOON 869

[1](#)C. RANGOON 948

[1](#)D. RANGOON 954

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Classified By: P/E Chief Leslie Hayden for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: UN Resident Coordinator Charles Petrie declined to give us a readout on Gambari's meetings until after Gambari briefs UNSYG Ban Ki Moon and the UN Security Council, although we learned he provided a quiet readout to the French and UK Ambassadors yesterday evening. Nightly raids and arrests continue, despite Gambari's appeal to Than Shwe that they stop. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs told us they had no information that terminally ill Prime Minister Soe Win had died, as reported in the exile press. His death has long been expected and will not significantly change the regime's power structure. End summary.

UN Silent on Gambari Visit

[1](#)2. (C) UN Resident Coordinator Charles Petrie informed us that, under orders from Gambari, no readouts of Gambari's meetings would be given to diplomats in Burma until after Gambari had briefed the UN Security Council on Friday, October 5. Petrie said that after the UNSC briefing, he was authorized to give readouts only to diplomatic representatives from the U.S., the UK, Japan, China, and India. Despite Petrie's claim that he was under orders not to provide briefings to the dip corps until Friday, we learned that Petrie provided a private readout for the French and UK Ambassadors yesterday evening after Gambari's departure.

[1](#)3. (C) In a separate conversation with pol/econ chief, UNFPA country representative Dan Baker (PROTECT) told us even the UN country team knew next to nothing of Gambari's meetings because Gambari's scheduled outbrief with the country team had been canceled so Gambari could meet with Aung San Suu Kyi for a second time. Baker told us the second meeting with ASSK was a significant development and that Gambari had

delivered a message to her from Senior General Than Shwe, although he did not know the content. Baker criticized Gambari for allowing the regime to keep him "cooling his heels" all day on Tuesday in Nay Pyi Taw. Baker told us he had been told by Petrie that Gambari had raised the nighttime raids and arrests with Than Shwe in "very strong terms." Regardless, these raids continued yesterday evening and a locally engaged UNDP employee and his family were taken into custody.

¶4. (C) In a meeting today with the Charge d'Affaires, Danish Ambassador Michael Sternberg relayed that two locally engaged WFP employees have also been arrested along with a locally engaged UNICEF employee in Mandalay. The Danish Ambassador received a second-hand briefing which described Gambari's visit as "better than expected" because Gambari was allowed to meet with more officials than on his previous visits. He criticized the German Ambassador for facilitating the Track II meetings with European academics in the aftermath of the crackdown (ref A). He said Denmark would object in EU councils, specifically citing the fact that the Track II participants, along with Gambari, were "paraded around" and "used" to demonstrate the regime's engagement with the EU and the UN. Sternberg also told us the Chinese Ambassador was heavily involved in Gambari's visit and that Gambari planned to return to Burma in November. Sternberg said that UN Assistant Secretary General for Humanitarian Assistance Magareta Whalstron planned to proceed with a mid-October visit to Burma to discuss humanitarian assistance with the regime (ref B).

Prime Minister Reportedly Dies - Again

¶5. (C) Exile news agency Mizzima, famous for its inaccurate reporting, ran a story today announcing that Prime Minister

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Soe Win had died October 2 in a Rangoon military hospital. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had no news of this development and this is one of several reports we have received of the Prime Minister's death over the last few months. Channel News Asia, based in Singapore, during an interview with the Charge, acknowledged they could get no information from Singapore officials either. PM Soe Win is in the last stages of terminal cancer and has been hospitalized, both in Rangoon and in Singapore, since January. His death will not bring about any significant change in the power structure of the SPDC, since he had no real power anyway.

Some Prisoners Released - Raids Continue

¶6. (C) Reuters reported today that eighty monks were released from the Government Technical Institute (GTI) where several hundred people are being detained (ref C). We spoke to the local reporter who filed the report, who told us he interviewed one of the released monks who was from Rakhine State. A separate contact of ours, whose son is being held at GTI, told us a Special Branch Police officer informed him that some civilians and monks were released last night from GTI and that his son would be released tonight.

¶7. (C) Several businesses and tea shops near the Eastern entrance of Shwe Dagon Pagoda were raided this morning and many people reportedly were arrested. The area had been a gathering place for protesters throughout the recent demonstrations. We believe the military is likely rounding up business owners and employees for interrogation.

Comment:

¶8. (C) Charles Petrie's decision to give readouts to select members of the dip corps while shutting others out is

disappointing and troubling. We can only surmise that he wants to blunt any U.S. criticism of Gambari's good news story. It is hard to imagine how Gambari can credibly sell his mission as a success when the UN's own employees continue to be arrested, despite Gambari's direct appeal to Than Shwe for this practice to stop. However Gambari tries to characterize his discussions here, it is clear to us that international outrage towards the military remains high. It would be very disappointing if some countries try to seize on an overly positive report to turn their back on Burma. For we also know that the Burmese people are looking to the international community to support their desire for change. They will be waiting for a report that offers clear indications that change will be forthcoming. End comment.

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